

No. II.

MARCH 28th.

1921.



ALCESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL RECORD.

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Cover

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EDITOR—Mr. Wells.

SUB-EDITOR—Miss Evans.

COMMITTEE—Edith F. Gander, R. H. Mander, R. H. R. Jephcott, Eunice A. Baseley, B. Walker, Evelyn Wilesmith, H. Lester.

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EDITORIAL.

The Editor and Committee, after careful consideration, have reluctantly decided to increase the price of the Record from sixpence to ninepence. The reason for this is the continued high cost of production, which has resulted in a large adverse balance with each issue of the magazine.

The Committee feel that it would be a pity to give up the magazine, and they venture to hope that all those who have supported it in the past will continue to do so.

The Editor wishes to thank all who have sent in articles, whether they have been accepted or not.

THE NEED OF EDUCATION.

The world needs higher education. By this statement I do not mean that every mortal should be transformed into a pedant, or a very learned scholar, but that every living man, of whatever nationality, should be taught a nobler philosophy. Ideals, far better than those cherished at present, must be presented to mankind if we are to progress.

To take the case of our own country today, it is a truism to state that the ideals of the great majority of Englishmen centre round materialism, pure and simple. We are not a very glorious nation, at present, although we have just won a great war. When will mankind realise that competing amongst themselves, one nation against another, for mere wealth will not necessarily bring lasting happiness in the end? When will workmen and employers find out that quarrelling with one another will inevitably bring their country to chaos? Instead of giving our all and our best for the sake of the com-

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munity at large, we are all striving for our own selfish interests. The greater our abilities and opportunities, the more God expects of us. Therefore material prosperity increases our responsibilities. We must all work together for a better world.

This is the main fact not to be lost sight of; if we really desire a better civilisation, a social Utopia, we must all co-operate. How can we learn to co-operate? By paying more attention to that education which imbues the race with nobler ideals. Elementary education is insufficient; it does not go far enough, because children under fourteen years of age cannot grasp true ethics and cannot understand what their real mission in life should be. Real education of the mind would tend to make people realise that successful wars with foreign countries are immoral in their way; it would help to make Capital and Labour cease their inglorious strife; it would enable Englishmen to view such questions as that of Ireland in a sane, sympathetic and reasonable state of mind. Above all, it would teach people that, though individual happiness is the main thing in life, to seek the common happiness of the whole race is a far nobler aim. The material side of life is at present encouraged to the detriment of the moral and spiritual part.

The social Utopia could be attained if education were the means employed to reach it. Learning is all right in its proper sphere, but mental and moral development is of far greater importance. The very cry that too much money is being 'wasted' on education to-day, is a sure indication that its instigators have not been properly educated themselves. It is a common fallacy that education is waste, like the reserves of soldiers and ammunition in preparation for war, and naval improvements in time of peace. If warfare is to end, if the League of Nations is to enforce its ideals, the whole mass of mankind must be educated much better than is the case at present.

I look forward, with that noble idealist Mazzini, to the time when we shall see "God's kingdom realised on earth, where institutions tend primarily to the bettering of the most numerous and poorest class, where the principle of association is best developed, where the road of progress has no end . . . where, in fine, the whole community, strong, tranquil, happy, peaceful, bound in

a solemn concord, stands on earth as in a temple built to virtue and liberty, to progressive civilisation, to the laws that govern the moral world." This "divine society, where all are equal, and there is one love, one happiness for all," can only, in my opinion, be attained by means of education.

R.H.M.

ON IRELAND.

They battle for an ideal, liberty
With fond attraction, irresistible,
Beckons them on and stimulates their cause.
Do not, O England, thirsting for revenge,
Relentlessly their cherished hopes destroy.
Sentiments having freedom for their goal
Cannot be stifled by mere brutal force.
The hated name of Cromwell may be passed
By unforgiving Ireland on to you.
Then seek with sympathy to comprehend
The wild desires of Erin's sons, nor try
To war, in vain, with nationality.
By mercy now you will the sooner gain
The grateful loyalty of a noble race.

R.H.M.

PEPYS AT ALCESTER.

Jan. 19.—Up early and to the Grammar Schole with a great concourse of boys and mayds wearing the red and black colours. None did weep to return to his Task, which pleases me much. So all to prayers, after which the Scholars did sort themselves into divers classrooms to mind their Books. In the buildings did remark the lofty rooms, and seemly kept, which made me think of my Schole-days at St. Paul's, where all learnt together in one hall with a noise like that of the Towre of Babel. But here all separate with drawing-rooms where classes can resort for study as snug as Aldermen in a Mayor's parlour. To the Staff-Room where did hear of some that made a joyful noyse in the hutte; thinking it was a quire of music, went outside to listen, but could not hear the choristers. Did see a tidy Bowling-

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Alley before the Schole, but none to use it, that I saw, which is a pity.

This day part of the Railway-machine did break loose and come rolling down to Alcester, where some damage done, but none wounded. A crowd all day to see the broken trucks, and at night a multitude came together by the light of flares. Betook myself away early, for I mislike magic and wizardry. Surely it were better to come from Coughton by water as heretofore. Did resort to the river-bank to await a wherry, but no Watermen to be seen, and a knave I addressed was as saucy as them of Wapping Old Stairs.

Jan. 20.—Lay long. At my waking heard that the young men and mayds, formerly Scholars, did meet this night to divert themselves with dancing. For this I dressed very neat and handsome in my white suit with silver-laced coat. I think they had not seen the like in Alcester. Some would have me dance, which I did very ugly. So supped, and after much mirth to bed.

Jan. 21.—Washed in the morning, with my head in a sad taking after the frolique. Dined on a poor Lenten dinner of pulse and cold bacon.

Jan. 31.—(Lord's Day.) Up early, and made myself as fine as I could, putting on my new camelotte riding coat and puce-coloured waistcoat from Cheapside (a great expence). Hearing the bells ring right joyfully, I hastened to join the procession of Bailiffs and Burghers all going to the Church of Saint Nicholas. Found a great gathering come together for the Court Leet preaching. The Beadle with his mace a brave sight, and the Bailiff's chain is noble, but found the ladies of the congregation sombrely clad, and this I mislike. After the sermon Beadle and I were much admired as we walked to the Town Hall, where we did refresh ourselves and were merrie (but I would have added a dish of larks or a venison pasty to the fare). When all ended, picked my way carefully down the dark staircase, not being minded to break my scull, whereon a prating, buffle-headed fellow did exclaim at my dress, and would have thrown mud at me, but I caught him finely by the ear and basted my

rogue finely. This night all to bed without prayers, it being washing-day to-morrow.

Feb. 3.—Hearing of some musicians that would play at the Schole, did make myself very fine and repaired to the upper hall at 5 o'clock, where we had great store of good musique. Him of the base viol was most to my liking.

Feb. 6.—I do intend to learn the mathematiques, and so began to-day with an able man.

Feb. 7.—Comes my master to put me to the Arithmetique, but my head is so full of the sights of Alcester that I cannot understand it as otherwise I should do.

Feb. 10.—This day did resort to the Schole to hear the senior boys and maids exercised in the liberal sciences, but I think they do not answer as well as we did at Paul's, only in Geography they did pretty well. I mislike the strait collar and cropped heads of this generation. So home, and fell to a good goose pye heartily.

Feb. 14.—Valentine's in Alcester, for which I am right glad. Last year Mrs. Theo chose me as her Valentine, and I had to give her a dozen pairs of gloves—an expence which put me to great pain.

Feb. 26.—To the Schole where I witnessed a contest of two sides dressed as I never did see, the one party in red and black stripes and the other like harlequins at Old Drury. This is a strange sport, which I did admire to witness. All did strive to kick a leathern missile that seemed like to perish by their violence. Such a shouting and cheering I have not heard since the Restoration of His Majesty.

Feb. 28.—This day I do hear of a great and sore plague at the Schole. Meeting a great boy, a civil lad, I asked him of this sickness, and he told me that daily more and more of the Scholars are taken with the Marblemania and Whiptopitis, which do rage through the Schole. This is bad news, but I have heard that the season is very sickly everywhere, and full of strange and fatal fevers. When I go to Whitehall next, must consult the learned leech (that treated the Duke of York lately) for a posset as a preventive against these plagues, and shall ask him if

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he hath ever seen the like in the foreign wars.

Mar. 12.—Abroad in the afternoon I heard the clash of weapons on the Schole field, where I did witness a strange marvel. Two and twenty maids, each armed with her club like an Amazon, did strive to break a small white missile, which flew everywhere, as did the mayds themselves, being only brought to order by the sound of a shrill whistle, which the blows for a space. But, in a moment, all began to lay again, each mayd fiercely charging and hitting, to the peril of her antagonist, and so continued for more than an hour. Did marvel that several Schole mistresses present did not lay a finger to stop the fray. O tempora; O mores! Left the field, shocked at the sight (which I hope never to see again), and so repaired, much shaken, to my lodging, where a good cup of sack somewhat recovered me.

A shrewish cold wind to-day, that I am the more willing to make an end of my gaddings.

(With apologies to Samuel Pepys,
1633—1703.)

INSTINCT SHOWN BY BIRDS IN THE PROTECTION OF THEIR NESTS AND YOUNG.

I have often been surprised at the wonderful instinct displayed by birds during the nesting season. Look at the way in which it guides certain birds in the placing of their nests. Take, for example, the cases of the kingfisher, the starling, and the woodpecker. The eggs of the kingfisher and woodpecker are pure white, while those of the starling are bluish-white. These eggs would, if laid in open nests, be most obvious to marauders; but instinct has taught the kingfisher to lay her eggs at the end of a fifteen-inch hole in the river's bank, while the woodpecker and starling secrete their eggs inside the trunk of a tree.

The wood pigeon builds a very frail nest; so frail in fact that one can see right through it. Strange to say, the pure white colour of the eggs acts as their protection; for, when looking at the nest from below, it is most difficult to distinguish

the eggs from the patches of sky visible through the tree-tops.

Sea birds display a wonderful sagacity in the placing of their eggs. Many gulls lay their mottled eggs among the pebbles of the beach, where it is with the utmost difficulty that the eggs may be distinguished from the surrounding stones. Other varieties lay their eggs high up on the cliffs in practically inaccessible places.

Quite as remarkable as the hiding and camouflaging of nests and eggs is the way in which young birds are guarded by their parents. When a family of partridges is threatened with danger the parent birds pretend to be wounded. The enemy, thinking the old bird an easy prey, follows her. Little by little the marauder is led away to a safe distance, and then, taking to her wings, the cunning mother rejoins her little ones. Peewits in a somewhat similar manner allure an enemy from their nests and young.

Besides this method of misleading a foe, some birds use a method of direct attack for protecting their nests and young. One case in particular stands out in my mind. It happened last spring that I discovered the nest of a tawny owl in an old hollow willow. The nest contained two sleepy youngsters, who blinked at me in a most ludicrous manner. About a week later a friend and I fetched the young owls out of the tree in order that we might photograph them. While we were doing this the parent birds watched operations from a neighbouring group of trees, but did not offer to molest us. When we had finished we returned the young ones to their home.

Another week passed and we came again; this time bringing with us my friend's small sister. Unfortunately we found that someone else had discovered the nest. One young bird lay dead on the ground, while the other was 'flopping' about unhurt. We could hear the parent birds in the trees around uttering shrill cries of alarm. We were examining the live young bird, when, happening to glance up, I saw the mother owl coming towards us like an arrow from a bow. I had no time to utter a warning, the great bird passed over us without the slightest slackening of speed, but, in passing, drove its sharp claws into the small girl's face, wounding her in seven places.

Another instance of protection by direct

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attack is afforded by the green woodpecker, for, if a stick is inserted into her hole when she is on the nest, the bird will attack the stick continually with her sharp beak.

Certain varieties of tits protect their nests by feigning to be snakes, and hissing loudly at any intruder.

Besides being protected by their parents young birds possess a certain instinct which helps them to protect themselves. Young blackbirds, when just learning to fly, protect themselves from observation by sitting absolutely motionless until the danger has passed. Young wood pigeons scare their foes by hissing at them in a most peculiar manner.

In my opinion the instinct shown by birds, in the nesting time, is one of the most wonderful things in nature.

R.H.J.

A HOCKEY MATCH.—(MOCK HEROIC).

Of fierce and heated battle do I sing!
Of well-fought hockey match—no trivial thing,
O Muse! lend aid to tell aright this deed,
And help thy servant in her hour of need.
The dawning light did disappointment bring,
For skies were grey, and mist veil'd everything.
Each individual warrior lived in hope,
Though mortals with the weather fail to cope.
Yet, had they known, their prayers and sighs were
vain,
For higher powers forbad that it should rain.
Forth through the air each guardian sylph had sped,
To interview the weather office head.
In solemn council did he grant their boon,
That there should be no rain that afternoon.
So when the time drew near the strife to start,
The warriors 'gan assemble, stout of heart.
Each Amazon was armed with weapon strong,
Unconscious that a sylph did sit thereon—
For these fair spirits each did undertake
To guide and guard its mistress, strife to make.
At sound of trumpet shrill, the warriors fair
Did enter then the lists—with plaited hair.
Eleven champions were there on each side,
And also, there, two referees beside.
Theirs was the task to sup'rintend the fight,

And see that all was fair, and just, and right.
Half of the combatants wore favours red,
In order to distinguish them, t'was said.
When all were ready, then there did appear,
Right in the midst of them, a whiten'd sphere,
A bugle shriek'd, the centre-forwards clashed,
At that hard, unresisting ball they dash'd.
As when the goddess on that festal board,
Did throw the golden apple of discord
So fierce the battle—to and fro it sway'd,
And panting warriors 'gan to look dismayed.
Those in the van strove hard to reach the goal,
Through which they fondly hop'd the ball would
roll.
Those in the rear stood ready to defend
The arch that yawning stood at either end.
The mighty conflict fiercely rages still,
When suddenly is heard the whistle shrill.
Hurrah! a goal! there comes the valiant cry,
And to their first positions all do hie.
For thirty anxious minutes lasts the fight,
Before those female warriors gain respite.
Then changing to the other end the lists,
Each army once again its foe resists.
At times there rises up the angry shout
of "Shoot! Why don't you?"—or in tones of doubt
"Offside," "Your roll" and then is heard anon
A cry of "Sticks!" or "Corner!" "Hit it!" "Gone."
Throughout this battle, all those sylphs of air
Flit round and guide the motions of the fair,
Amid the clash of arms and noise of strife,
Each flies unhurt, with an immortal life.
Though should one for a moment but withhold
Its fixed attention from its mistress bold,
In that same moment she is sure to feel
Her footsteps stagger and her senses reel.
(For thus it is that painful wounds are got—
When with the Amazon her sylph is not).
Sometimes a warrior, rushing for the ball,
Loses her balance and thereon does fall:
Or else a sylph, with cunning turn or twist,
Would trip its mistress's antagonist.
Whene'er a goal is scored there does arise
Above the foemen's wails, victorious cries.
At this the echoes wake, and Arrow white
Does whisper to its banks, of deadly fight.
Yet sudden as begun, strife ceases, when
The round of trumpet note is heard again.
The victors cheer the conquered enemy;
The foe return the cheer, though wearily.

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The battle o'er, their homeward way they wend
Each treating other, not as foe, but friend.

E.F.G.

YOUTH.

"The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

In this Wordsworth gives us an ideal picture of youth—and yet it is not at the same time a true one? What a wonderful time is youth! It is the interlude between childhood and maturity, and as the one is daily left further behind and the other approached, youth is attended by that 'vision splendid'! This 'vision' plays an important part in life, for youth is the time of high ideals and noble impulses; deep feelings which are felt by the very soul. "Can it be true," youth asks, "that man sees the vision die away, and fade into the light of common day?" And, indeed, why should this be so? Youth, at any rate, clings to its ideals and thinks not of the time when they shall have faded—if such time there be.

Youth is full of life and enthusiasm, full of laughter and tears. Emotions are intense at this period of life—one moment youth is bounding to the heights, the next, sinking to the depths. It is the springtime of life, a time of rapid change and of awakening Nature. Youth is not only joyous and impulsive, happy-go-lucky, and unthinking; it is a time of awakening. Life becomes full of expectation and interest; the soul becomes alive to the new sense of personality. Not only do the wonders of life make themselves felt, but also the difficulties, and any harsh contact with the world may almost shatter youthful ideals. To youth everything is good or evil, black or white—it is difficult to realise that there are many shades of grey.

Appreciation or commendation from others make a world of difference at this critical stage. On the other hand disapproval or reproach, oftentimes have a much greater effect than older people can realise. A thoughtless, impulsive act on the part of Youth—and one which is immediately repented of—may

give rise, perhaps, to a well-meant and well-deserved rebuke from one whose good opinion may mean everything to the sinner. Youth sinks in despair, loses hope, and feels that never again can that episode be forgotten, never can the trust that has been forfeited, be regained.

Yet youth is none the less a wonderful time and we may well think that

"That age is best which is the first
When youth and blood are warmer."

This warmth is characteristic of youth, and joy in life its essence. "Oh, the wild joys of living," sang Browning, and again

"How good is man's life, the mere living!
How fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses
For ever in joy."

And this is youth's attitude to life.

Youth also is possessed of that strong sense of justice, the longing to play fair in every way, to

"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

Sober age may say that youth sees everything through a magnifying glass, even with an exaggerated intensity of feeling—yet this does not alter youth's outlook or power of feeling. Browning may say

"Grow old along with me
The best is yet to be."

But youth cares not. If age can bring its own compensations, let it—but in the meantime let youth enjoy youth to the full. As for the future that tinted with the glamour of the unknown. It is an idealised present. Such is youth—full of

"Wonder and hope,

Present promise and wealth of the future beyond
The eye's scope."

E.F.G.

STALKING THE SCHOOL GHOST.

Bang! bang! We paused for a moment and glanced at one another. "Oh! its only a door," said one of my five companions, "do hurry up and hide." In spite of this command we did not hurry, but lingered round the bell table looking apprehensively up the stairs and corridor. "I believe," said the most timid, "that it is the School Ghost"! Instantly we took up the idea, and with breathless

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"ohs" and "ahs" we planned an attack on this illusive inhabitant of the A.G.S. We turned down the gas to a tiny glimmer, and draped rugs around our persons, and we all assumed a different name. The search party was made up of an untidy Savonarola, Brutus, in a brown toga, a timid Cæsar, Queen Elizabeth, Dickens and Columbus. Oh! how gloomy everything looked. We listened intently to the soft footsteps we were sure we heard in the art room. Now we are ready! Who will lead? Everyone can see that Columbus ought to have gone first. But he had Elizabeth (who was very nervous) to protect. Cæsar excused himself on the plea of delicate health, Brutus was busy with his toga, and Dickens was feverishly assisting him, so there was no one left but Savonarola, with trembling knees, which were not, however, visible under his robes. Being a great admirer of courage, he crept softly up the first stair. Slowly he felt the second with his foot, at the same time measuring the distance to safety with his haggard eye. Slowly, very slowly—bang! Down we flew with a terrific yell, for Queen Elizabeth had carelessly dropped a ruler, startling Savonarola out of his wits. So that attempt was useless. We then decided to explore the girls' cloak-room. We marched solemnly up the corridor, none of us, strangely enough, eager to meet our victim. "I expect," heartlessly remarked Elizabeth, "when the ghost sees you Brutus, he will say, 'Et tu Brute,' and fall into your arms." Brutus, however, did not seem desirous of such an affectionate meeting, and he stepped behind Dickens. Several times we glanced round to see if the bell was safely on the table, and not performing weird antics. "I hope," hoarsely murmured Dickens to Brutus, "I hope he's not very er-ah, very invisible; what should I say if I walked through him by mistake?" "Oh! just apologise," answered Brutus, "that's all." We had now neared the fatal spot. Cæsar voiced the public opinion when he said, perhaps too carelessly. "Oh! let's go back. It is so cold in school I should feel responsible if the younger ones (looking kindly at the indignant Elizabeth) caught colds." We hesitated a moment. Once more a door banged noisily. With one accord we took to our heels and fled, leaving the ghost in peace. In the morning matters assumed a different aspect, but try as we would the only signs of the ghost or our hunt for him were the spots of candle grease dotted at intervals down the corridor.

E.W.

DANCING CLASS.

It is 6.30 p.m. The hall is brightly lit up and several girls are trying to exercise their vocal chords by chanting "Bubbles." "Someone do play a fox trot," suddenly exclaims some small person. "No," shouts another, "lets have a set of lancers." Of course, everyone is in favour of this. Accordingly, our pianist kindly offers to play for us, and after a slight dispute as to who shall take the gentleman, etc., we begin. The dance is proceeding gaily and perhaps rather excitedly, especially in "ladies to the centre," when the door bursts open and in come the dancing mistresses. The dance stops instantly. For the space of a minute, silence pervades the hall while the mistresses wend their way across the room. Then beginning in subdued whispers, the noise and babble recommences until all is once more one big confusion.

For the first half-hour we have patiently to endure exercises (I think we all enjoy them really). Occasionally we are told that we are stiff because we fail to touch the floor with our heads when we lean backwards. However, I think I can venture to say that none of us have yet obtained quite such flexibility!

After many futile attempts to imitate the dancing mistresses in classical exercises and in fancy dances, we arrive at what we consider the most enjoyable part of the class—the everyday dances. We commence with the waltz. But, alas, it comes to an end all too soon and we have to pass on to the chassè-waltz, one-step, etc. However, we feel quite favoured when we have the 'lancers' and the 'tango.' Both these dances we all enjoy immensely. Finally comes the 'last march' when we say good-bye to the dancing mistresses, and then we make a rush for the cloak-room. Here we occasionally relate interesting dreams—the listeners get most excited; sometimes some most imaginative person attracts our attention with her weird stories. She even sees in her imagination great black beetles, with yellow spots, crawling in front of her!

At last the noise of voices dies away and each of us sets off on our homeward journey, impatiently looking forward to the next dancing class.

K.E.F.

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TOPS.

While the members of the upper school have been oblivious of all except hockey, the juniors, with no less enjoyment, have been fervently engaged in the more humble task of spinning tops. No matter how cold the morning is, or how warm the afternoon, tops never fail to be in motion. It is impossible now to stroll round the playground without intrusion, for a stinging slash across your legs with a whip, or a voice panting "Mind my top, please," will compel you to take refuge on the field.

Many of these individuals seem to have developed a genius in this branch of science, and are able to set the top up by their heel in a most precocious manner, while their less gifted friends look on with envy.

Top collecting is a very popular hobby, and the enthusiast will empty her bulging pockets and proudly show you her treasures. Tops of all fantastic shapes and colours, from the ponderous looking humming top to the podgy little yellow one, hardly bigger than a thimble meet your gaze. Before you have time to examine them more closely, the impatient owner has thrust them back into her pocket to have "another spin" before the bell goes.

This pastime is not wholly confined to the lower school. Certain people out of V A have put aside their dignity and yielded to the mania. But here they are excelled by their so-called inferiors, for when someone out of Form 2 has set their top up, they begin to hit it. With many gasps and flourishes, which touch nothing unless it be some unfortunate bystander, they watch their top go down, or if by chance they do manage to hit it, their joy is unlimited. When they leave off at 2 o'clock they grudgingly acknowledge they have had "quite a decent time."

Should there be anyone who has not tried this fascinating recreation they should do so at once, for I can assure you, through experience, that you will find it simply "topping."

M.S.

SPRING FLOWERS OF THE WOODLAND.

Springtime! Hurrah! Off we go to the woods where the rays of the bright spring sun are piercing the interlacing branches and playing in light and

shadow over ground, which alternates in patches of green, brown, and blue.

The delicate, finely divided leaves of the wood anemone, spread out between the clumps of hazels, around which they are scattered like a shower of stars. As we gather a handful of these, we cannot fail to admire the drooping white flower on its slender stalk, showing the under side of its petals tinged with mauve-pink. In the clearings that have been made by the woodman during the winter, thick clusters of primroses dapple the mossy ground. The crinkled leaves of these plants spring from the roots, and spread out in rosette fashion, showing up the pale yellow flowers, which stand erect on their hairy stalks.

Further on through the wood, in an open space among the oaks, the ground in the distance has a purple blue sheen. Thither we hasten for we know it is carpeted with bluebells. These flowers are always great favourites, for they keep well in water, and make such a charming decoration. How pretty the little blue bells look, as they hang drooping from the long juicy stalks to the leafy soil. Here and there, we come across a very peculiar plant, with a straight stem of reddish colour, and very tough to break. When the stalk is cut, a white, sticky juice oozes from the cut end. The leaves are long and narrow, and the pale green flowers are very interesting, because each structure that looks like a separate flower is really a cluster, surrounded by two tracts which are joined together to form a cup. This plant is called wood spurge.

We can scarcely ramble through any wood without finding the dog violet, which is scentless, and is usually a pale-coloured flower. In some parts of the country the sweet violet grows, and this is recognised by its scent, and deeper coloured flowers.

The modesty of the violet is attributed to its drooping flower, the stalk of which bends over, causing it to hang its head. Its charming heart shaped leaves add greatly to its attraction. A very peculiar thing about the violet is that its seeds are produced in small green petalless flowers, which never open.

In the moist parts of the wood we shall find the early purple orchis, with its long, rather broad, spotted leaves, and a spike of pinkish purple flowers.

D.B.

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SIXTH FORM DIARY.

SPRING TERM, 1921.

Jan. 19—Jan. 21.—Christmas to School—what a change! Really, we could do little this week, except talk of the holidays. Each member of the form endeavoured vociferously to drown all other voices. Result—sounds as of the Tower of Babel. This term we are one less in number, Anker having left.

Jan. 24—28.—Once more we settled down to serious study after our holiday dissipation. We do not mean to imply that we did nothing in the holidays: some of us, at any rate, found much reading to be done (Tarzan of the Apes, and such-like!). This week we found ourselves exiled from our sanctum at dinner-time owing to the fact that it was requisitioned for rehearsal purposes ready for the coming entertainment. On this account we assailed III B room (though when there we could scarcely refrain from acting as III B-ites).

Jan. 31—Feb. 4.—Still working hard—so much so, that we even forget to keep our fire alight. Indeed, on Tuesday, we had to adjourn to the Library owing to the icy temperature of our own abode, a certain member of the staff refusing to have anything to do with us in such a place. Really, we began to wonder whether our noses were suffering from frost bite, or what else ailed them. Finally, we decided that we ought to appoint a successor to our lost stoker. This honourable post was offered to one member, who declined with thanks, since it was as much as his brain was capable of to remember to ring the bell. As no one seemed willing to undertake these onerous duties no appointment was made.

Feb. 7—11.—A week which fully justified our applying the epithet "humdrum" to our existence. Hence nothing to record.

Feb. 14—18.—Still the term, like the wounded snake, "drags its slow length along". There was not even a prospect of a half-term holiday to enliven us. Do we observe Lent by fasting from holidays?

Feb. 21—25.—This week the monotony was broken by the fact that on Tuesday the first meeting of the Debating Society was held.

This called forth much formal discussion both before and after, and eventually resolved itself into a duel between the two sexes. There was one exception, the rene gade being accused, by those of the same sex of sheer pigheadedness.

Feb. 28—Mar. 4.—What weird sounds were those issuing from the VI. Form room! It was merely the VI. practising the song for Wednesday's Musical Society Meeting—though some ignorant people may say that the angels all were singing out of tune and hoarse with having little else to do (How well the VI. know Byron!!!) Certainly, we were not hoarse with having little else to do. Maybe hoarse, but the rest could never be true of the VI.! (even if they had nothing better to do than to play marbles!)

Mar. 7—11.—Yes! We always knew the VIth were hard-worked and hard-working. Her was proof positive on doctor's evidence, for one of our members was absent through overwork. Indeed, we had all, without exception, taken our turn to stay away, if only for half a day, and now we have come to the root of the matter. Even members of the staff commented on our alternatin absences, and now at length certain one grew anxious for our general health. The whole form is looking forward to the holiday to recuperate (especially those who have examinations then!—though they get a sympathy for overwork!).

We might add that the scientific branch of the form do not appear to suffer any ill effects from their Herculean labours.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

Last term Miss Watts left us to be married. We were very sorry to lose her, but at the same time we offer her our very best wishes for the future.

In her place we have Miss Taylor.

It appears that R.J. has been labouring under the delusion that "Tartarin sur les Alpes" is French for "Tarzan of the Apes." Should any of our other readers be thus in error we hope they may soon be undeceived.

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Can it be true that Mr. Lloyd George has recently been made a Freemason of Birmingham? According to J.J. this appears to be a duly authenticated fact.

E.G. informs us that "croquant des pâtisseries" signifies "cracking jokes." If this is the case could she supply us with the recipe for "edible jokes?"

What is the Memphian minx? A Sphinxian riddle to which perhaps F.A. can supply an answer.

We hear many interesting details about the new system of detention. One of the boy prefects, philosophizing upon the most effective method of punishment for boys, remarks, "If you want to make the sinner 'sit up,' make him lie down, he can't stand it."

Another Sphinxian riddle—did they play football in the time of Pharaoh? We shall be glad if some kind and well-informed reader will supply S.B. with an answer.

Anyone desirous of making a jumper will do well to consult the IIIB pattern. From them we learn that if you take two snowdrops from three books you will have a jumper left. Maybe it is not as easy as it looks!

We note that even VA do not consider it lowering to their dignity to play hopscotch or to spin a top. Is it not possible that we may hear next of the VIth form playing marbles?

The collection held on March 1st for the fund for the starving children of central Europe amounted to £5.

As Anker left last term, Mander i has been made captain of the Brownies in his place.

At last two of the new classrooms are fit for habitation and IIIb and IIIa have taken possession.

THE MUSICAL SOCIETY.

In common with everything connected with the School the Musical Society continues to make good progress. The membership has again increased and now includes practically every member of the VIth, VA, VB and IVA. Two meetings have been held. At the first a most enjoyable programme was provided by Mr. Rowe and his friends from Bidford, and was as follows:

Trio, for violin, viola and piano. - *Mozart.*
Song - "The Lute Player," *Frances Allitsen.*
Duet for two pianos, Andante, Allegro, - *Mozart.*
Song - - - - - *Tchaikowsky.*
Trio, for violin, 'cello and piano, Miniatures, Minuet, Gavotte, Valse Russe. - *F. Bridge.*

The second meeting was held on March 2nd, and was noteworthy as being the first programme to be given entirely by present and past members of the School. The programme consisted of the following:

Song - "The Mermaid," - *Girls.*
Duet - Minuet, *E. Clarke and G. Edkins.*
Piano Solo - Allegro, - *M. James.*
Lecturette, "Haydn's Life and Work," *Miss Jones.*
Duet Andante gragioso, *B. Clarke and J. Wells.*
Song - "My Mother bids me," - *Girls.*
Piano Solo - Air with variations - *M. James.*
Chorus - "Come, gentle Spring," - *Choir.*

E.B.

DEBATING SOCIETY.

The first meeting of the recently formed Debating Society was held on February 22nd. Edith F. Gander proposed "That in the interests of the nation more women should be elected to Parliament." She was supported by Lester, whilst Jephcott and Walker led the opposition. When, after a lively discussion, the motion was finally put to the meeting, twenty-one voted in favour of the motion, and twelve against.

The subject of "Homework" was discussed on March 22nd.

B.W.

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HOCKEY.

We have this season been favoured with much better weather and as a consequence none of our matches have been scratched on that account as they were last year. However, we have not been quite so fortunate in results. On October 23rd we went to Redditch and easily beat our opponents 5-1. We visited Evesham Grammar School on November 6th, but were beaten 8-1. We had a very good game on December 18th when we met a team of Old Scholars. But we were hard pressed and with difficulty kept them out of our goal. The result was 1-3. On January 22nd the girls from Redditch Secondary School visited us and after a fairly even game we won 2-1. The Evesham Grammar School girls met us on March 12th and again overwhelmed us by 7 goals to nil. We have only one more match fixed for this season, but to this one we are eagerly looking forward, for the Old Scholars are again forming a team to play against us.

The following have played in the team this season;—E. Clarke, E. Stock, P. Richardson, P. Edkins, M. Walker, N. Hill, F. Andrews, F. Winnett, G. Edkins, K. Wilesmith, E. Baseley, L. Young, V. Bunting, E. Wilesmith.

FOOTBALL.

A highly successful football season draws to a close. So far eleven matches have been played and only on two occasions has the team been beaten.

The results of the five matches played this term are as follows:—

Jan. 29th, v. Redditch School, won 6-3.
Feb. 5th, v. Evesham G. S., won 14-0.
Feb. 26th, v. Old Boys, lost 2-5.
Mar. 5th, v. Redditch School, drawn 1-1.
Mar. 12th, v. Evesham St. Nicholas, drawn 1-1.

The following boys have played for the School:—Bowen, Bunting i, Bunting ii, Hall, Walker, Holder, Staff, Mander i, Jones, Betteridge, Wilson, Mander i.

Two house matches have been played resulting in drawn games. Brownies v. Jackals (1-1) and Brownies v. Tomtits (0-0). The meeting of the Jackals and Tomtits is being looked forward to with much interest.

B.W.

THE SCOUTS.

The scouts have been very active this term. Many of the new boys have joined and it has been found necessary to form a new patrol. These recruits are very keen and practically all have now passed the "tenderfoot" test. Thanks to the abnormal weather, it has been possible to do a great amount of out-door work. The troop now numbers 50. Jephcott has become Patrol Leader of the Foxes in place of Anker, who has left.

E.B.

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